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# Office of Legislative Auditor

Daniel G. Kyle, Ph.D., CPA, CFE, Legislative Auditor



## Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Program

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Act 894 of the 2001 Regular Legislative Session amended Louisiana Revised Statute (R.S.) 39:87.3. This revision requires the legislative auditor to provide an assessment of those agencies that are deficient in their capacity to execute the requirements relative to the production of performance progress reports to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget. This report gives the results of our examination of the performance data reported for the Enforcement Program within the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for the first quarter of fiscal year 2002.

Sincerely,

Daniel G. Kyle, CPA, CFE  
Legislative Auditor

## Background

The Enforcement Program is one of nine programs within the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (department). The program's mission is to protect Louisiana's fish and wildlife resources and their habitats. The program also strives to create a secure environment for the maximum enjoyment of hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities. This mission requires Fish and Wildlife officers to patrol the entire state on a 24-hour basis to detect violations of law. For fiscal year 2002, the legislature appropriated \$15.53 million and 274 positions for this program.

For the first quarter of fiscal year 2002, the program had three objectives and eight performance indicators. Three of these are key performance indicators and five are supporting. For the first quarter of 2002, the department was only required to report values

for the three key performance indicators. Exhibit 1 on page 2 shows the objectives and performance indicators for the Enforcement Program.

### What We Found:

- Seven of the eight performance indicators for this program are valid.
- One of two key performance indicators that we tested was calculated and reported accurately.
- There is no way to ensure that *Louisiana hunting accident rate per 100,000* is accurate.
- The department has not developed objectives or performance indicators for several major functions of this program.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Department of Wildlife and Fisheries**  
**Enforcement Program**  
**Objectives and Performance Indicators**  
**Fiscal Year 2002-1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

	Target	Value Reported
<b>Objective 1</b>		
To ensure that, due to inadequate enforcement, no species becomes threatened or extinct or is reduced in abundance sufficient to require harvest reductions.		
Performance Indicator:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of fish or wildlife populations status change due to inadequate enforcement</li> </ul>	0	0
<b>Objective 2</b>		
To hold the number of boating accidents to 63 per 100,000 registered boats.		
Performance Indicators:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of boating accidents per 100,000 registered boats</li> </ul>	18	18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of citations for failure to comply with personal floatation device laws</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of students completing boating safety course</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A
<b>Objective 3</b>		
To keep the hunter accident rate at or below 5.50 accidents per 100,000 hunters through educating all those required by law to take hunter education.		
Performance Indicators:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Louisiana hunter accident rate (accidents per 100,000)</li> </ul>	5.5	5.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of instructors certified</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of students certified</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of courses offered</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A
<b>Note:</b> N/A refers to the fact that values for supporting performance indicators are required to be reported for only the second and fourth quarters of each fiscal year.		
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor staff using data obtained from the Louisiana Performance Accountability System.		

## Validity

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### **Are the Enforcement Program's performance indicators valid?**

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The validity of a performance indicator is determined by whether it is suitable for its intended use. Factors we used to gauge the validity of a performance indicator include whether it is relevant to the missions, goals and objective of the program and whether it can be linked to a major function of the program. Another factor we used is whether the performance indicator is realistic or achievable.

The performance indicators of the Enforcement Program are all valid, with one exception--the performance indicator for the first objective:

*Number of fish or wildlife populations status change due to inadequate enforcement*

We determined that this is not a valid performance indicator because there are many factors other than the program's enforcement activities that can affect this performance indicator's outcome. Examples of other factors include adverse weather conditions, disease or migratory habits. Departmental officials informed us that they cannot definitely correlate the activities of their enforcement officers with a species' population change. Thus, this performance indicator does not measure performance of this program and is unrealistic. The department plans to discontinue use of this indicator in fiscal year 2003.

## Management Controls Assessment

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### **Do the internal controls of the department offer assurance that the performance indicators and data are reliable and valid?**

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We examined certain of the department's internal controls by interviewing department officials, reviewing the department's documentation of controls, and examining source documents for one of the key performance indicators (the number of boating accidents). The department's data input, processing and review controls suffice to offer reasonable assurance that the data used to compile that performance indicator's value is reliable. We did not assess the controls for one performance indicator because we determined that it is invalid. For the number of hunting accidents, controls were not very reliable because staff manually gather these data from sheriffs' offices once a year. There is no way to ensure that the sheriffs provide accurate information.

## Reliability

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### **Are the performance indicators reliable?**

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One of two key performance indicators that we tested was calculated and reported accurately. We did not examine the reliability and accuracy of the performance indicator for the first objective (number of fish or wildlife populations status change). As mentioned previously, we determined that this performance indicator is invalid and thus, we did not test its value for reliability.

We checked source documentation concerning the number of boating accidents per 100,000 registered boats and interviewed the staff personnel who calculate this performance indicator. We found that the value reported for this performance indicator

is reasonably reliable. There may be some accidents that are not reported on a quarterly basis because the department does not receive the accident report in time to include it in the quarterly count.

For the third key performance indicator, "Louisiana hunter accident rate per 100,000 hunters," department officials informed us that they do not calculate the value for this performance indicator on a quarterly basis. Rather, they only calculate this value annually and have a note in the Louisiana Performance Accountability System that the reported number is an estimated value for the quarter. Accordingly, without any source documentation to review, we could not determine if the reported value of 5.5 is reliable. State law does not require hunting accidents to be reported to the department. As a result, staff must collect these data from sheriffs' offices at the end of the year.

## **Other Matters**

There are several major functions of the Enforcement Program that do not report performance information. These functions include Saltwater Enforcement, the Statewide Strike Force, Refuge Patrol, and the Oyster Strike Force. Legislative staff and the Office of Planning and Budget should work with the Enforcement Program and the department to develop objectives and performance indicators that will measure the other major aspects of this program's performance.

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### **Need more information?**

Contact Dan Kyle, Louisiana Legislative Auditor, at (225) 339-3800.

A copy of this report is available at our Web site ([www.la.state.la.us](http://www.la.state.la.us)).

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